# WebBuyer

SITE REVIEWS

## SITE REVIEWS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

BY KEVIN SAVETZ

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## PC SHOPPING

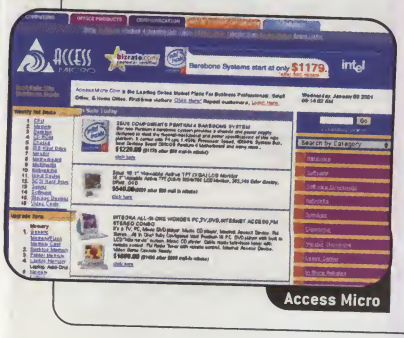
The sites in this listing sell computers, components, and accessories from multiple manufacturers. See the sites under "PC Direct Vendors," or check the *Computer Shopper* Source Directory ***(cgi.zdnet.com/slink?8145)*** for more information on PC manufacturers offering only their own brands (such as Dell and Gateway).

### aberdeeninc.com

Targeting the savvy consumer who craves speeds and feeds, **Aberdeen** offers extensive specs on a wide variety of computers and accessories. Shoppers can see side-by-side comparisons of motherboards the company carries.

### accessmicro.com

Need a gift for that special someone who has everything? Check out **Access Micro,** which stocks tons of items ranging from T1 routers to complete desktop systems. The help desk and hardware guide provide aid to first-time visitors, and the new clearance area offers returned items and old inventory for below wholesale cost.



Access Micro

### www.applied-computer.com

Selling PCs and supplies since 1984, **Applied Computer** promises to beat any advertised price. The company features a mind-blowing 800,000-product inventory—check the site's list of the 1,000 most popular ones. Beware of the handling fee tacked onto orders under $200.

### blackbox.com

Get connected! Specializing in network products, **Black Box's** extensive 900-page catalog of storage, cabling, and surge-protection products—plus other connectivity accessories—can be viewed online or off.

### buy.com

Among the products offered on this monstrous, multifaceted site are computers, electronics, books, and movies. **Buy.com** sells a whopping 850,000 items and offers a price-matching policy on most of them.

### cdw.com

**CDW** offers an array of hardware and software. Create side-by-side comparisons in many product categories and surf up dollar-saving deals on the rebates-and-coupons page.

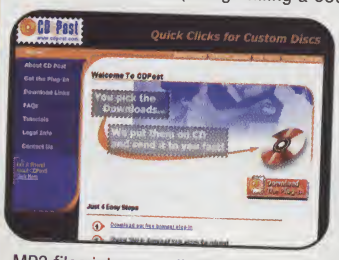
COMPUTER SHOPPER Site OF THE month

MARCH

### cdpost.com

Now here's a site that's burning for your business. **CD Post** lets you make your own CD-ROMs without investing in a CD-R burner. The inexpensive service caters to PC users who only need to burn CD-ROMs occasionally, currently charging $6.99 for each 650MB data CD or 74-minute audio disc, with free shipping to U.S. addresses. New customers can get their first CD, up to 100MB, free of charge.

After installing CD Post's software, you upload files from your PC directly to CD Post (though filling a 650MB CD over a 33.6Kbps connection takes a long time) or designate any file on the Internet without relying on your bandwidth. After uploading the files you want burned, press the Create CD button, and about a week later the disc will arrive in the mail.




In addition to data CDs, CD Post can burn audio discs. The service will even turn your MP3 files into an audio CD that can be played on any stereo.

The service, currently only available for Windows users, is useful for creating long-term backups of important data and archiving digital-camera pictures, but it won't satisfy the needs of folks who need to burn CDs frequently.

RECENT WINNERS

FEBRUARY

Gómez.com .....www.gomez.com

JANUARY

Crucial Technology.....www.crucial.com

### compgeeks.com

Revenge of the nerds, indeed! Shop the **Computer Geeks Discount Outlet** for discontinued and refurbished computer gear. It's a trove for the do-it-yourselfer piecing together a desktop system. The site features low prices and complete specs on every product.

Computer Geeks Discount Outlet

### compuplus.com

**Comp-U-Plus** offers top-of-the-line customer service, including a 30-day money-back guarantee and free technical support. Its catalog isn't earth-shattering in scope, but plenty of name brands are represented, and prices are reasonable.

### compusa.com

The well-organized **CompUSA** rounds out the usual selection of PC hardware, peripherals, and accessories with areas devoted to electronics and gadgets. The frugal won't want to overlook the site's clearance section.

### www.computergate.com

In business since 1991, **Computer Gate** offers a 30-day satisfaction return policy on its products, which include peripherals and built-to-order PCs. Check out the Quick Index: You'll never have to poke around for the right product again.

### computers4sure.com

The 17 well-stocked departments at **Computers4Sure.com** include networking equipment, peripherals, PDAs, scanners, and more. Bargain hunters can quickly sniff out deals on the Special Offers and Clearance pages.

### computershopper.com

***Computer Shopper's*** own piece of cyberspace provides access to product reviews, interactive guides to choosing a desktop or a notebook, and How to Buy sections for the most popular product categories.

## SITE REVIEWS

### www.computersurplusoutlet.com

You're just crazy enough to build your own desktop system, aren't you? Then you'll feel right at home at **Computer Surplus Outlet,** where you'll find closeouts, overstocks, refurbished equipment, and liquidation items. You can even stumble upon the occasional assembly-required Pentium system for less than $100.

### crucial.com

One of the largest providers of memory upgrades on the Web, **Crucial Technology** offers nearly 50,000 upgrade options for 10,000 computer systems. The site's Memory Selector helps buyers find the right product, and the company backs its memory with a lifetime warranty.

### cyberrebate.com

**CyberRebate.com** only sells products that come with money-back rebates. You'll find a small selection of computer accessories and software. The "100% Off" tab reveals 900 products whose rebates equal their cost—but it can take months to receive your money, so don't hold your breath!

### cyberwarehouse.com

If you can't pass up a bargain-basement sale (and don't mind waiting a few days for your item to ship), **CyberWarehouse** is definitely for you. The site offers a small selection of PCs, monitors, and other peripherals.

### dalco.com

**Dalco Electronics** stocks everything from motherboards to monitors, ships them the day you order, and includes a 30-day guarantee. Bargain hunters will want to start with the specials found on the home page, which change regularly.

### dartek.com

With a roster of more than 100,000 products, **Dartek** peddles an impressive selection of hardware, software, networking equipment, and office furniture. Well-designed features include printable spec sheets, customers' product ratings, a product-watch feature, and a frequent-buyers' club.

### direct411.com

Operator? Information, please! **Direct411.com** offers an impressive selection of in-stock hardware and software products. The catalog includes servers, memory upgrades, storage devices, digital cameras, and software. Online technical support is available.

### dirtcheapdrives.com

If you can store data on it, this site sells it. **Dirt Cheap Drives** offers hard drives, CD-ROM and DVD hardware, and drive arrays, with detailed technical information about each product. This decade-old company also stocks mounting kits, media, and accessories.

### ecost.com

The **eCost.com** catalog spans the full range of PC hardware and software, including ready-to-use systems, peripherals, accessories, and applications. The site features personalized product recommendations and fastidious organization.

### egghead.com

**Egghead.com** shoppers can browse the site's hardware, software, office-product, and electronics superstores. Corporate users will find volume pricing, leasing information, and software licensing in the business center.

### www.electrified.com

Need a serious bargain? **Electrified Discounters** specializes in products that are discontinued, second-inventory, refurbished, off-lease, or otherwise past their prime. Systems range from new Pentium II laptops to under-$200 used 486s. (Wear your sunglasses, however—this site is so garish it can be difficult to navigate.)

### elinux.com

At **eLinux** you'll find hardware and software for users of the Linux operating system. The site is so serious about Linux, its desktop and notebook systems don't come bundled with that "other" OS. Features include Linux news and a community forum.

### www.firstsource.com

Focused on the technology needs of businesses, **Firstsource** offers a broad range of choices in computer hardware, rack-mount systems, network tools, phone systems, wiring, and software. Real-time online customer service is available.

### globalcomputer.com

**Global Computer Supplies** features same-day shipping on a Godzilla-size selection of PC components, accessories, software, furniture, and media. "Showrooms" highlight products from featured manufacturers. Watch out for the 15 percent restocking fee on nondefective returns, though.

### gogocity.com

You'd think **GoGoCity.com** would be the one-stop-shop for knee-high boots, hot pants, and all things "gogo." Not so fast, slick. This site actually features desktop and notebook computers, peripherals, software, and accessories. The strangely diverse product categories also include children's items and interior-decoration products.

### insight.com

With more than 100,000 items for sale, **Insight** offers an impressive catalog of hardware and software. Sign up for one or more of the 100 free newsletters featuring bulletins on new products, closeout specials, and tech news. Customized sites are available for shoppers in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

### www.jandr.com

Hardware, software, home-office products, and appliances abound at **J&R Computer World,** the New York City-based superstore famed for its selection and, ahem, "brusque" service. Avoid the attitude with this online version, which specializes in cameras—both digital and traditional film models. Product help is available via e-mail, online chat, and phone.

### laptoptravel.com

**Laptop Travel** is road-warrior heaven! The site sells portable-computing and international-travel gear, including electrical adapters, modem converters/couplers, and security accessories. You'll find traditional and "camouflaged" laptop carrying cases, laptop RAM, and storage add-ons.

### thelinuxstore.com

**TheLinuxStore** offers a small selection of "penguin-powered" hardware and software that's compatible with the

SITE REVIEWS

popular alternative operating system. The community area offers Linux news, free downloads, and Web links.

## mcglen.com

**McGlen Micro's** specialized searches can help you find memory and other accessories compatible with your computer, printer, or copier. With the Build-To-Order Configurator, shoppers can design a custom system, which the company will configure and ship to you in two days.

## mediasourceinc.com

**Media Source** is obsessed with storage media. This single-minded site sells CD-Rs, bulk floppies, optical discs, Zip disks, Jaz disks, DATs, and tons more. The selection of writable CDs includes brand-name and generic disks, business-card CD-Rs, and printable media.

## megahaus.com

**MegaHaus** bills itself the "drive authority," offering a wide variety of storage solutions, including hard drives, DVD drives, RAID arrays, and CD-mastering products. A tech-info area features FAQs and specifications on hardware ranging from DVD players to drive brackets.

## mei-microcenter.com

**MEI-Micro Center** offers new and refurbished desktops from Compaq, eMachines, Hewlett-Packard, and PowerSpec. You'll also find a small selection of peripherals. Rummage through the bargain bin for deals on closeouts, refurbished units, and overstocks.

MEI-Micro Center

## memman.com

All of the desktop and laptop memory sold at **Memory Man** carries a lifetime warranty, and the site's reference guide offers RAM-configuration info for all name-brand computers. The site also *sells processors*, motherboards, hard drives, heat sinks, and more for intrepid system builders.

## memory4less.com

**Memory4Less.com** offers low prices on a wide variety of RAM, including older types you may have been pulling your hair out to find. If you don't know the memory requirements of your computer or digital camera, this site will clue you in.

## microx-press.com

**MicroX-Press** offers detailed information about most products, as well as a handy feature that will send you an e-mail whenever a product's price drops below a limit you set. Customers are invited to rate and review products they've tried.

## www.mobile-mania.com

Don't freak out, kids! Cut back on the sugar intake, and head over to **mobilemania.com,** where digital cameras, e-mail devices, PDAs, cases, and adapters of all sorts are available for folks on the go.

## mobileplanet.com

**MobilePlanet** is home to a gaggle of high-tech tools and toys for mobile professionals. The selection includes handheld and notebook computers, PDAs, wireless-communication products, and travel-size printers and scanners. Rotating 3D images offer views of many products' least flattering sides.

## mobshop.com

**MobShop** offers group-buying discounts on computer hardware, software, PDAs, and home electronics. As more customers buy a product within a specified time period, the price drops for all buyers. If you're not in too much of a hurry, you can save some serious bucks.

## motherboards.com

With a wide selection of motherboards from nine manufacturers, do-it-yourselfers can handpick the perfect innards for their new PCs at **Motherboards.com.** Customers can post product reviews, dinging those models that just don't live up to the hype.

## www.mwave.com

In addition to PC systems and peripherals, **Multiwave Direct** stocks notebook accessories, videoconferencing equipment, and network tools. Top sellers, "blowout specials," and rebate forms are a click away from the home page.

## neutronet.com

**Neutron** carries thousands of computer systems and peripherals from nearly 400 manufacturers and distributors. A handy toolbox offers easy access to best buys, help for first-time buyers, and a massive manufacturer directory.

## notebooksuperstore.com

Devoted exclusively to portable computers, **NotebookSuperStore.com** sells more than 50 different laptop models from nine manufacturers. You'll see technical details about each model, and a comparison tool helps you zero in on the best portable for your needs.

# SMALL-BUSINESS SERVICES

## iprint.com

Need to build brand awareness? Creating personalized items for business is a snap at **iPrint.com.** Place your mark on stationery, rubber stamps, business cards, and sticky notepads, or create your own promotional items like key chains, T-shirts, and golf balls.

## j2.com

Communication is key. With **j2's** service you can receive faxes and voice mail in your e-mailbox, and listen to e-mail messages via a toll-free phone number.

## mimeo.com

Makin' copies: **Mimeo.com** offers Internet-based document printing, binding, and delivery. Use the special software to print proposals and presentations from your PC, selecting your custom printing and binding options. The documents will be delivered the next day anywhere in the United States or Canada.

## paycheckcity.com

Find out what you're owed and owe. **Paycheck City's** Web-based calculators can verify the accuracy of payroll checks. Employers can use the site to complete W-4 forms, and employees can verify what they should be paying in federal, state, and Social Security taxes.

## smartship.com

Select the right carrier for your shipments. Enter the weight and other details about your package at **SmartShip.com,** and the site helps you choose the best major carrier, whether your priority is speed or cost.

## stamps.com

First there was e-mail, now e-postage. At **Stamps.com** you buy postage online and print it out on an inkjet or laser. You can send items first class, Priority Mail, and Express Mail. Delivery confirmation and certified mail are also available.

## webex.com

Let's meet! **WebEx** is a collaboration system for holding online meetings. Share documents and applications with colleagues who have your meeting-room password and the WebEx plug-in. Free virtual offices offer personalized conference rooms with an online calendar, address book, and document storage.

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE FLAHERTY

SITE REVIEWS

### 123cdc.com

This site's name says it all. **Computer Discount Center** offers a wide variety of system add-ons, including storage devices, digital cameras, networking hardware, and displays, all at competitive prices. The site provides extra-detailed product information.

## ONLINE PHOTOFINISHERS

### ofoto.com

Send, snap, and wait to receive. Upload your digital photos or send film rolls in prepaid mailers, and **Ofoto** will send back prints—sized from 4x6 to 8x10. New customers can get their first prints free through ongoing deals. The service provides unlimited storage space in secure online albums.

### www.photonet.com

**Kodak PhotoNet** provides the best of both worlds—the convenience of dropping off film and getting prints from your local photofinisher, plus digital pictures you can e-mail to Grandma or put on your Web page. You can also have your photo printed on a mug or mouse pad.

### photopoint.com

It's a digital shoebox for your pictures. Store digital photos online at **PhotoPoint** and e-mail PicCheers, online greeting cards featuring your photo, to friends. The site's photography workshop offers semi-monthly "assignments" to expand your photo-taking skills.

### photos.yahoo.com

Get prints from your digital camera, or digital pictures from your roll of film, with **Yahoo Photos.** You can store up to 25MB of photos online; albums may be private, shared with selected friends, or viewable by anyone.

### photoworks.com

Package your pictures as you like. In addition to prints and online pictures, **PhotoWorks** will create a CD-ROM with high-resolution versions of your photos. The site's address book allows you to easily e-mail a single picture or an entire album to family and friends.

### shutterfly.com

**Shutterfly** specializes in printing pictures taken with digital cameras. You can add a creative touch by adding borders, text, or color effects. In addition to traditional prints, the service lets you create photo-greeting cards with personal messages. Shutterfly then mails them directly to your recipients.

### snapfish.com

**Snapfish.com** is the least expensive online photofinisher. The service will print your digital or traditional film pictures for free, charging only $1.69 per roll for shipping and handling. The catch is that you must view your pictures online within a month, completing a short survey each time.

### onvia.com

**Onvia.com,** a business-to-business computer outlet, offers a handful of features that distinguish it as a small-business resource, including a Request for Quotes marketplace, buying guides, and B2B auctions.

### outpost.com

Free overnight delivery and a 30-day money-back guarantee are among the exceptional customer-service features at **Outpost.com.** The site sells a wide selection of computer hardware and software, personal electronics, and office products.

### palmgear.com

Users of handhelds will appreciate the extensive selection of free and commercial programs downloadable from **PalmGear HQ.** Shoppers can buy PDA hardware and accessories, including carrying cases and hip, fashion-forward styli. Sign up for an e-mailing list to receive news, specials, and user tips.

### pcconnection.com

**PC Connection** offers nifty bargains on a colossal variety of PC and Macintosh products. Smart Selectors ease the searching process for shoppers looking for turnkey systems, cameras, printers, monitors, or memory to fit specific guidelines.

### pcmall.com

Shoppers at **PC Mall** receive free lifetime technical support on the site's vast selection of computers, hardware, and software. The site's business-solutions forum offers corporate leasing and volume pricing. Apple-heads can find all their favorite Macintosh products at the **Mac Mall** sister site ***(www.macmall.com)***.

### pcwonders.com

Will wonders never cease? Not at **pcWonders.com,** which sells more than 120,000 hardware and software items, plus home electronics and "bargain blowouts."

### pczone.com

**PC Zone** carries an impressive selection of all things PC. You'll find links to a clearance area and other stores: **Mac Zone** and **Electronics Zone.** Printable rebate coupons can save you some cash.

### provantage.com

**Provantage** offers PC products from more than 1,000 manufacturers, including a large selection of books and training materials. The site's Personal Tracking List feature lets customers build a list of product bookmarks, then monitor prices and availability.

### www.qualityclick.com

Flea-market aficionados will love **QualityClick.com,** which offers the unusual ability to "haggle" for selected products. The store covers all the basics for PC users, including hardware, networking supplies, accessories, and software, and offers a build-to-order system configurator.

### shopper.cnet.com

The **CNET Shopper** search engine takes the guesswork out of finding a deal on hardware, software, and accessories. The site tracks the prices of more than 200,000 products in 100 stores. (CNET Networks is *Computer Shopper's* parent company.)

### shoppingplanet.com

Do-it-yourselfers will appreciate **Shopping Planet's** inventory of barebones systems, add-on cards, and kits. A section of the site specializing in software and hardware for the Linux operating system is available at ***www.shoppingplanet.com/cm/linux.asp.***

### www.sparco.com

Looking for that something extra? Check out **Sparco.com's** list of products that come bundled with "free stuff." The site stocks more than 130,000 products, and it offers a list of discounted items for students and faculty members of academic institutions.

### www.spidergear.com

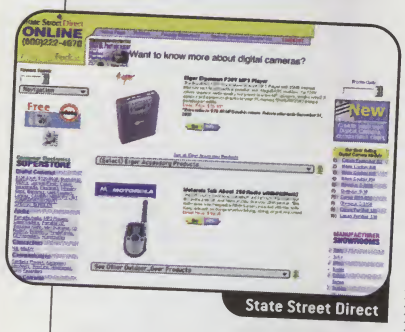
**SpiderGear** offers new and refurbished computers, cameras, home audio and video products, and car audio items and appliances. A $10 optional membership entitles you to reduced prices and an annual rebate.

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE FLAHERTY

SITE REVIEWS

## www.ssdonline.com

At **State Street Direct,** shoppers will discover a huge selection of computers and imaging products. Digital-camera shoppers will find many items of interest, including a gallery for comparing images taken with various cameras.



State Street Direct

## staples.com

Yeah, they got that. **Staples'** Web site offers a liberal price-matching policy on computer accessories, software, and office supplies. If you order similar items often, you can set up personalized shopping lists. The company can occasionally take its time shipping items out to you, though, so beware.

## 2for1inkjet.com

Searching for incredible deals on printing supplies? Check out **2 For 1 Inkjet,** which offers two-for-one prices on toner and ink cartridges for every brand of inkjet and laser printer, copier, and fax machine. The company offers free shipping on larger orders.

## 3re.com

If you can tolerate hand-me-downs to save some bucks, check out **3Re.com,** which repairs and repackages factory-returned computers and electronic equipment. Offerings include desktops, notebooks, printers, monitors, network equipment, and software.

## tccomputers.com

In business since 1988, **TC Computers** sells fully configured systems, motherboards, and name-brand peripherals. The company's specialty is motherboards: It tests each one before shipping and bundles a step-by-step installation video.

## tcwo.com

**Thompson's Computer Warehouse Outlet Center** offers only a small selection of computer products. You may find only a dozen monitors or four CD-ROM drives, but the prices are fantastic.

## techstore.com

**TechStore.com** offers hardware in dozens of categories and highlights monthly top sellers. The site also sells a wide range of software—everything from Microsoft productivity suites to children's titles.

## thortek.com

A wide array of computer accessories awaits **ThorTek** shoppers. The site provides quick links to the "top 5" products in several categories, including hard drives, monitors, digital cameras, and CD-RW drives.

## tigerdirect.com

**TigerDirect's** site offers 46,000 products, including custom-built computers that are tested and shipped within 48 hours. Up for a little adventure? Order a build-it-yourself custom PC kit, and let the fun begin!

## truedataonline.com

**True Data Technology** stocks an exceptional catalog of motherboards, hard drives, and other upgrades. The site also features communication essentials for businesses, including DSL equipment and telephony products.

## www.usbstuff.com

**USB Stuff** specializes in Universal Serial Bus-equipped gadgets, including digital cameras, CD-RW drives, printers, modems, hubs, and input devices. Uh-oh: Poor site design makes navigation difficult. A sister site at ***www.firewirestuff.com*** stocks IEEE 1394-compatible hardware.

## usedcomputer.com

**Used Computer Mall** is a marketplace for, you guessed it, used computer equipment. Shoppers can list hardware to sell, or look for items to buy using the free classified ads. The site will also help you appraise equipment.

## warehouse.com

The five "warehouses" under **MicroWarehouse's** roof sell PC hardware, software, Mac products, networking components, and supplies. The site accepts corporate, educational, and government accounts, and offers business leases on many products.

# PC DIRECT VENDORS

## axissys.com

You'll know you're not being taken to the cleaners at the **Axis Systems** Web store—it offers a best-price guarantee on its preconfigured notebooks, servers, desktops, and workstations.

## buyabs.com

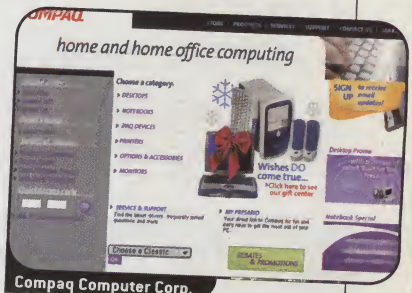
Exceptional customer support on custom-configured desktop and notebook systems is the goal at **ABS Computer Technologies.** All systems include a 30-day money-back guarantee. Some computers are available with Linux preinstalled.

## buy-atlas.com

**Atlas Micro** offers desktop PCs built around Pentium III, Celeron, and AMD processors. Buyers can use drop-down menus to build a custom configuration and are protected by a reasonable 30-day return policy.

## compaq.com

Three arms of **Compaq Computer Corp.'s** site offer computers for everyone. See Compaq AtHome ***(athome.compaq.com)*** for home and home-office systems, DirectPlus ***(www.directplus.compaq.com)*** for business PCs and servers, or the Compaq Factory Outlet Superstore ***(compaqfactoryoutlet.com)*** for big bargains. The site allows shoppers to test-drive Compaq systems running various operating systems.



Compaq Computer Corp.

## cyberpowerinc.com

Each **CyberPower** PC includes a three-year warranty and 30-day money-back guarantee. The site's service area includes downloadable drivers and lifetime tech support.

## dell.com

**Dell Computer Corp.'s** electronic storefront has always led the way in terms of ease of use. The site is jam-packed with detailed information that makes it a snap to match a machine to your needs. Each system is configurable to the nth degree via drop-down menus, and you can get quick access to online support customized for your PC.

## www.fosa.com

**Fosa's** built-to-order notebook computers include a 15-day money-back guarantee with no restocking fee and lifetime technical support. We just wish the site didn't depend so heavily on the Macromedia Flash plug-in. Sheesh!

## www.fujitsu-pc.com

**Fujitsu's** site focuses on portable computing, including notebook PCs and pen-based tablet computers. Each computer includes several warranty options. The site's Refurbished Outlet peddles money-saving deals.

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## gateway.com

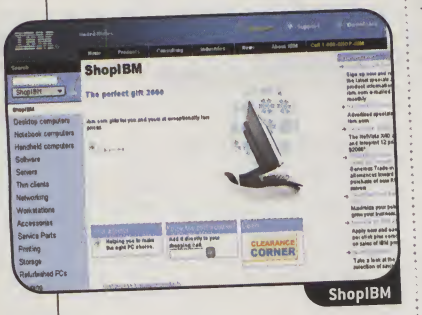
One of the biggest players in online computer sales, **Gateway's** enormous and informative site sells custom-built desktops and portables, delivering them on time 98 percent of the time, according to BizRate.com.

## hpshopping.com

At this site, **Hewlett-Packard Co.** sells its lines of desktop and notebook computers, handhelds, PDAs, digital cameras, and printers. Business leases are available, and the site makes repeat purchases easy for businesses and individuals.

## ibm.com/shop

**ShopIBM** sells business and home computers, notebooks, servers, thin clients, networking equipment, and peripherals. The build-to-order option allows buyers to customize a new desktop PC. Linux is an option on laptop models.




## idot.com

From low-cost budget models to powerful monster machines, **iDot** offers customized desktop and notebook computers with a good return policy. The iForum area includes tech articles and Q&A lists of interest to PC shoppers.

## kaypro.com

You can design your own Pentium III desktop system at **Kaypro,** but the custom configurator doesn't offer as much flexibility as we'd like. The site's notebook area carries a selection of Fujitsu portables.

## microexpress.net

**Micro Express** offers built-to-order desktop and notebook computers featuring AMD and Intel processors. Each system includes a 30-day guarantee and a two- or four-year warranty. Business leases are available.

## micronpc.com

One of the largest direct PC vendors, **micronpc.com** sells computers to home-office users, larger businesses, government buyers, and buyers outside the United States. The Factory Outlet offers refurbished and discontinued systems.

## nutrend.com

Custom-configure a home or business desktop PC at **NuTrend Computer Products.** The company stocks a wide selection of machines running your choice of Intel or AMD processors. Each system comes with a three-year warranty.

## sagernotebook.com

Specializing in notebook computers, **Sager** offers a variety of options, from budget machines to speedy multimedia units. Service includes a 72-hour repair-turnaround guarantee and lifetime free tech support. Business leases are available.

## shopprostar.com

Each computer in **ProStar Computer's** line of notebook PCs is backed by a 30-day money-back guarantee, a speedy-repair promise, and free tech support. The handy comparison tool helps buyers zero in on the best model for their needs.

## sonystyle.com

**SonyStyle** sells Sony's line of VAIO desktops and notebooks, plus digital cameras, displays, and storage devices. The Xtras Direct section of the site carries add-ons for PCs, digital cameras, and other equipment.

## store.apple.com

**Apple Computer's** online store looks just like an iMac, all shiny and clean. This well-designed site allows you to custom-configure any Macintosh computer and offers a wide array of Mac-compatible software and accessories. Beware the one-click ordering feature, however—using it may be a bit too convenient for impulse buyers!

## tiny.com

Britain's favorite direct computer seller is now targeting us Yanks. **Tiny Computers'** line of prebuilt desktop and notebook PCs includes models for professionals and first-time buyers.

## unitedmicro.com

**United Micro** offers a unique degree of configurability with its desktop and server PCs. Choosy shoppers can, for instance, pick the motherboard model and brand of cooling fan. You can see pictures of each component before you build the system.

## www.winbook.com

Focusing exclusively on portables, **WinBook Computer Corp.** offers machines with a 30-day money-back guarantee, a one-year warranty, and free technical support. Ironically, some of the site's best deals, the daily "Web specials," can only be ordered by phone.

## windrover.com

**Windrover** serves up a 30-day return policy and three-year warranty for all of its prebuilt and custom-configured laptops. Optional extended warranties include express service and 24/7 technical support.

# PC RESOURCES

## cablemodeminfo.com

**CableModemInfo.com** serves up reviews of cable-modem and DSL hardware, plus tips on sharing a modem between PCs. The site can help you find a cable-ready ISP in your area.

## www.consumersearch.com

**ConsumerSearch** collects abstracts of product reviews for all sorts of products, including computers, appliances, sports equipment, and automobiles. Each abstract includes a citation (for magazine articles) or a link (for online reviews).

## dailyedeals.com

**DailyeDeals'** coupon pages offer codes that will instantly shave $5 to $40 off the bottom line at major online retailers. The First Time area links to substantial discounts for first-time customers.

## dcresource.com

The **Digital Camera Resource Page** is an unbiased, comprehensive source of information for digital-camera buyers and owners. Shoppers can glean necessary info from the FAQ page, buyer's guide, message boards, and reviews.

## dealtime.com

**DealTime.com** is an independent comparison-shopping service. The site aggregates prices from hundreds of online merchants, auctions, and classified sites. Also, 21st-century shoppers can compare *prices by cell phone or* wireless PDA, thanks to the site's mobile service.

## www.epubliceye.com

Watchdog **ePublicEye.com** serves up a rating site that helps shoppers choose online businesses that deliver the best customer service. Available in six languages, the site employs "secret shoppers" who patronize Internet businesses, conducting audits and rating the service of each.

## expertcity.com

**Expertcity.com** promises live, 24-hour computer assistance from real human beings. When you pose a question, experts across the Internet bid for your business. Read their profiles, compare prices, then choose the expert you like.

SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 167

SITE REVIEWS

## 56k.com

See **56K.com** for a primer on 56Kbps modems, a price shopper for buying a modem at the best price, and downloads of the latest firmware. Read the buyer's guide and upgrade FAQ before buying a new modem.

## www.ftc.gov

The **Federal Trade Commission's** Web site is packed with useful information about consumer fraud and how to avoid it—online and off. Articles address online auctions and how to protect yourself when shopping on the Net.

## gomez.com

**Gómez.com** offers ratings and customer reviews of e-commerce sites in two dozen categories, ranging from Web-based computer stores to drugstores, apparel vendors to online brokers. Check the ratings on ease of use, customer confidence, and cost.

## motherboards.org

**Motherboard HomeWorld** is packed with motherboard news, reviews, specifications, and tips. Its comprehensive database of 1,100 products includes driver information, technical details, and overclocking hints.

## nextag.com

**NexTag** is a sophisticated buying service that can help frugal shoppers find the lowest possible prices on computer equipment, electronics, books, music, and videos. Entering your ZIP code allows NexTag to calculate shipping and tax for accurate pricing.

## pdastreet.com

**PDAStreet.com,** a resource for users of Palm, Windows CE, Psion, and Visor personal digital assistants, offers message boards, software downloads, news, and product reviews.

## pricepda.com

**PricePDA.com** is a price-comparison engine for buyers of personal digital assistants, accessories, and software. Users can access the site anywhere via WAP-enabled cell phones.

## rammatters.com

**RAM Matters** humorously explains how adding memory to your computer will make you more productive. You'll get help in determining the type of memory your computer requires, as well as installation tips.

## scambusters.com

Busted! **Internet ScamBusters** is a site and newsletter aiming to help Net users avoid getting cheated. Each newsletter focuses on a single type of scam, including ones that target online shoppers.

## usb.org

Check **USB.org** for technical information about the Universal Serial Bus, as well as answers to frequently asked questions and information about devices that use it. You'll find information for end users as well as developers.

## windrivers.com

**WinDrivers.com** is a comprehensive archive of drivers and DLL files for hard drives, sound cards, scanners, and other hardware. The site also provides links to antivirus updates and BIOS upgrades.

## www.worldowindows.com

**World O'Windows** is a collection of news, resources, and tips about current and future versions of Microsoft Windows. The site can be invaluable if you're considering upgrading or if your recent upgrade is causing problems.

# SOFTWARE SITES

## accountingshop.com

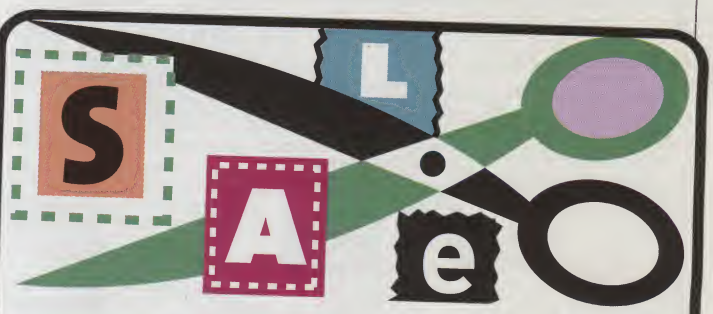
The **Accounting Shop** focuses on accounting software. Shoppers can choose from an extensive catalog of high-end, midrange, and small-business packages, and get rebates when upgrading from QuickBooks or Peachtree software.

## atomicpark.com

**AtomicPark.com** specializes in business software, offering free shipping on all orders. Specialized product categories include voice-recognition software and fax applications.

## beyond.com

**Beyond.com** presents software for PC, Mac, and PDA users. In addition to traditional boxed titles, the site sells downloadable software from major publishers and a respectable selection of computer hardware. (CNET Networks, *Computer Shopper's* parent company, is an investor in Beyond.com.)




# COUPONS AND DEALS

## amazing-bargains.com

**Amazing-Bargains.com** delivers with daily updates to its e-shopping coupon codes. You can view the bargains by category or store, or find the most popular, newest, or about-to-expire deals. Newsletters send e-mail alerts of new and expiring bargains.

## couponing.about.com

Although it's taken some linguistic liberties in coining the word "couponing," the **About.com Couponing and Refunding** forum is home to thoughtful and informative articles about saving money online and off. Shoppers share experiences in the discussion forum.

## dailyedeals.com

The cost-cutting coupon pages at **DailyeDeals.com** carry codes that instantly shave $5 to $40 off the bottom line at major online retailers. The First Time area links to sites that offer substantial discounts to first-time customers.

## edealfinder.com

Let the savings begin! **EdealFinder.com** has hundreds of online coupons, with new deals daily, and is exceptionally easy to browse. Use the My eDealFinder tool to show only deals that interest you, print coupons for stores in your local area, and receive customized e-mail alerts.

## eversave.com

Look online; save on the street. **Eversave.com** is a repository of coupons for brick-and-mortar merchants. Enter your ZIP code to see a list of participating stores in your area, then print coupons for the products that interest you.

## fatwallet.com

Before you go e-shopping, check **FatWallet.com** for Web-coupon codes. This elegant site is easier to browse than many flashier coupon sites. In the Deals of the Day section, you'll find pointers to specials at major online stores.

## flamingoworld.com

Another trove for online coupons, **FlamingoWorld.com** delivers deals in categories ignored by similar sites, such as maternity wear and travel.

## freebitz.com

Web shopping doesn't have to empty your pockets. **FreeBitz** is an index of sites that offer products or information for free, such as food samples, CD-ROMs, and magazine subscriptions.

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SITE REVIEWS

## buycheapsoftware.com

The name sums it up. **Buy Cheap Software** offers a relatively small selection—about 300 titles—at deep discounts. The site does sell programs from well-known publishers, including Adobe, Corel, Lotus, and Microsoft.

## buyonet.com

**Buyonet** specializes in downloadable commercial software. Hundreds of business applications, utilities, and games are available for download. For a nominal fee, shoppers can order a CD backup of purchased titles.

## chumbo.com

In addition to tons of Windows, PDA, and Mac programs, **Chumbo.com** features a Linux Store that sells applications for the popular alternative OS. You'll also find an array of DVD movies here.

## CUSTOM MUSIC CDs

## cdmadebyu.com

The rhythm's right at **CDMadeByU.com,** a service specializing in R&B classics. Mix and match songs from artists like Marvin Gaye, Gladys Knight, and the Temptations. Check the Top 40 Tracks page for the site's most popular tunes.

## cdnow.com

Make your own mix CD with **CDNow's** custom-CD service. You can choose from 10,000 songs, with a fair selection of big-name artists, and preview songs with RealAudio. The site doesn't have a search engine, though, and you can't mix tunes from different musical genres.

## imix.com

Find the songs you want at **imix.com.** This site offers the broadest selection of titles—nearly 300,000 songs, by everyone from Judy Garland to Nirvana. Once you choose a few tracks, it offers "instant recommendations" of other tunes to suit your taste.

## ktel.com

**Ktel.com's** custom-CD service warehouses a wide selection of popular recordings from the 1950s to present. Genres include swing, instrumental, soul, and country. Its customer-service department can be difficult to reach.

## mixfactory.com

Home to hard rock and cool up-and-comers, **MixFactory.com's** custom CDs include both audio, which can be played on any CD player, and video, which can be viewed on your PC. An arm of the site specializes in custom-made PC game demo discs.

## musicalacarte.net

**Music à la Carte** serves up new-age and world music. Based in Australia, the site features many international musicians and makes ordering simple for U.S. buyers.

## cws.internet.com

**Stroud's Consummate Winsock Applications List** is the ultimate one-stop download site for Internet software, including Web-development tools, browsers, and chat clients. You'll find comprehensive file lists, ratings, and extensive reviews. A free newsletter provides summaries of new software releases.

## dealdealdeal.com

**Dealdealdeal.com** offers office suites, utilities, graphics programs, operating systems, games, and edutainment software. Although the selection isn't massive, shoppers will find a nice mix of new and older software titles.

## download.cnet.com

**CNET Download.com** will help you find shareware and free software, linking to tens of thousands of PC, Mac, Linux, and PDA titles. Well-written newsletters and down-to-earth reviews help you to locate the perfect program. (CNET Networks is *Computer Shopper's* parent company.)

## ebworld.com

The online arm of the ubiquitous Electronics Boutique stores, **EBWorld.com** is a video-game player's paradise, offering 3,000 products. Its home page highlights new releases, coming-soon titles, and top sellers.

## freewarefiles.com

Windows users who want software without having to spend any money can start at **Freeware Files.com.** This site features quick links to the most popular giveaways.

## jumbo.com

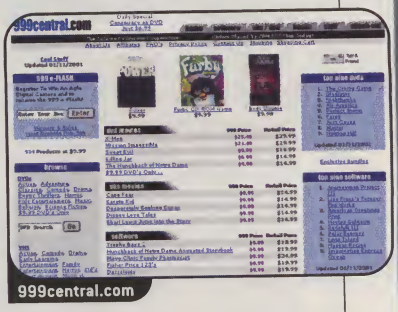
**Jumbo** is the perfect name for this monstrous file archive, which features programs for sale, commercial-application demos, shareware, and freeware. Jumbo Guides offer articles on backing up, sharing MP3s, and other computing topics.

## mightyscholar.com

**Mighty Scholar Corp.** sells hand-picked educational software, categorized by age range and subject.

## 999central.com

The price is right at **999central.com,** which stocks 500 software and 200 DVD titles, each for $9.99. Educational, entertainment, and lifestyle applications are the most common. The site offers an ongoing "buy seven, get one free" deal.




## www.pdfstore.com

The **PDF Store** specializes in software for creating and working with Portable Document Format files, carrying a convenient, focused selection. The site sells shareware and commercial software for immediate download.

## soft4u.com

**Soft4U.com** specializes in software for businesses, resellers, schools, and government offices. The company offers same-day shipping on most software and highlights two daily specials at wholesale cost.

## softwarebuyline.com

**Software BuyLine** has a massive selection of software titles for Windows, Mac OS, Windows CE, and Palm OS. Shipping is free for orders of $50 or more. You'll also get easy access to product-rebate information.

## www.tucows.com

It's not just bovine bliss: **Tucows** is also an incredible archive of freeware and shareware. Plenty of local mirror sites keep downloads speedy. The category list and reviews make finding the software you seek a breeze.

## zdnet.com/downloads

Dude, you'll need more bandwidth. Download shareware, freeware, and demos from **ZDNet Downloads.** The site offers daily software highlights and quick links to the week's most popular software. Every program is rated, reviewed, and checked for viruses, so your new software won't come with any unpleasant surprises. (ZDNet is owned by CNET Networks, *Computer Shopper's* parent company.) ▼

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